

Message Text

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R 161400Z APR 74

FM AMCONSUL PARAMARIBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1615

INFO AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 PARAMARIBO 159

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NS

SUBJECT: FY 1975-76 CASP FOR SURINAM

REF: A-3, FEB. 12, 1974; STATE 066019

1. THE GOS ANNOUNCED ON FEBRUARY 15 THAT IT INTENDED TO ACHIEVE INDEPENDENCE FROM HOLLAND BY THE END OF 1975. THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS MADE SUBSEQUENT TO THE SUBMISSION OF THE SURINAM CASP. THE COUNTRY TEAM HERewith SUBMITS THE FOLLOWING FOR INCLUSION IN THE SURINAM CASP AS ISSUE NUMBER 3: WHAT SHOULD BE THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF U.S. REPRESENTATION IN SURINAM FOLLOWING INDEPENDENCE.

2. IMPORTANT ASSUMPTIONS:

A. THE PRO-INDEPENDENCE NPK-COALITION WILL REMAIN IN POWER UNTIL INDEPENDENCE.

B. THE GON WILL ENCOURAGE AND, IF POSSIBLE, SPEED UP SURINAM'S
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INDEPENDENCE IN ORDER TO DIVEST ITSELF OF THE ECONOMIC AND

SOCIAL PROBLEMS OF SURINAM.

C. U.S. INTERESTS IN SURINAM ARE CONSIDERABLE. THEY CONSIST OF INVESTMENTS OF AROUND DOLS 500 MILLION, PRIMARILY IN BEUXITE, ALUMINA AND ALUMINUM MINES, AND REFINING AND SMELTING FACILITIES. ALSO, SURINAM IS, AFTER JAMAICA, THE SECOND LARGEST PRODUCER OF BAUXITE IN THE CARIBBEAN. ALMOST ALL OF THIS BAUXITE GOES TO THE U.S.

3. THE THREAT TO U.S. INTERESTS CAN BE EXPECTED TO INCREASE. THE POLITICAL CLIMATE IN SURINAM HAS BEEN GENERALLY MODERATE AND STABLE. UNTIL RECENTLY SUCCESSIVE GOVERNMENTS OF SURINAM HAVE BEEN FRIENDLY TO U.S. INTERESTS AND TO FOREIGN INVESTMENT, AND HAVE BEEN PRO-WESTERN AND ANTI-COMMUNIST IN ORIENTATION. THE ELECTORAL VICTORY OF THE NPK BROUGHT INTO POWER ELEMENTS OF THE COALITION WHICH FAVOR NATIONALIZATION AND WHICH ARE AT BEST NEUTRALIST INTERNATIONALLY, WITH A TILT IN FAVOR OF SUCH "THIRD WORLD" COUNTRIES AS CUBA AND THE PRC. WHILE NOT YET DOMINANT THESE ELEMENTS WILL PROBABLY CONTINUE TO GAIN INFLUENCE IN THE GOVERNMENT AND AMONG MANY SURINAMERS. THIS PROCESS WILL BE ABETTED BY A CONTINUATION OF THE ECONOMIC STAGNATION WHICH HAS CHARACTERIZED THE ECONOMY FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS. SOCIAL UNREST WILL INCREASE, THUS FURTHER RADICALIZING THE POLITICAL CLIMATE.

4. ISSUE RESOLUTION:

RECOMMENDATION: UPON SURINAM'S ATTAINMENT OF INDEPENDENCE THE USG SHOULD UPGRADE THE CONSULATE GENERAL TO EMBASSY STATUS AND ASSIGN A RESIDENT AMBASSADOR IN SURINAM. THE NUMBER OF U.S. AND LOCAL POSITIONS SHOULD REMAIN THE SAME, EXCEPT FOR THE CREATION OF AN AMERICAN SECRETARIAL POSITION. THE POST DOES NOT HAVE SUCH A POSITION AT PRESENT. USIS - THE ONLY NON-STATE ACTIVITY AT POST - SHOULD ALSO REMAIN AT THE SAME PERSONNEL LEVEL: ONE LOCAL USIS EMPLOYEE. HOWEVER, THIS RECOMMENDATION ASSUMES THAT SURINAM WILL RECEIVE A GREATER SHARE OF USIS RESOURCES FROM THE PAO RESIDENT IN GEORGETOWN.

4. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:

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U.S. INTERESTS COMPARE FAVORABLY IN IMPORTANCE WITH U.S. INTERESTS IN CERTAIN OTHER CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES WHERE THE U.S. MAINTAINS AMBASSADORS. IN ADDITION, THERE ARE THE OTHER USUAL INTERESTS IN SOVEREIGN STATES WHICH ARE BEST SERVED BY HAVING A RESIDENT AMBASSADOR IN COUNTRY. SURINAM WILL HAVE A VOTE IN THE UNITED NATIONS AND IN OTHER INTERNATIONAL BODIES, DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITY IN SURINAM BY OTHER COUNTRIES, INCLUDING SOME HOSTILE TO U.S. INTERESTS, CAN BE EXPECTED. IN ADDITION,

THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE GOS POSTURE, GENERALLY PRO-WESTERN, PARTLY AS A RESULT OF ASSOCIATION WITHIN THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS, MAY SHIFT TO A "NEUTRALIST" STANCE.

5. THE COST OF UPGRADING THE POST TO EMBASSY STATUS AND MAINTAINING A RESIDENT AMBASSADOR SHOULD BE RELATIVELY MODEST. ADDITIONAL COSTS WOULD BE, PRIMARILY, THE ADDITION OF A SECRETARIAL POSITION, UPGRADING THE ECON/COMMERCIAL OFFICER POSITION (O-5) TO DCM (O-4), AND THE ACQUISITION OF A RESIDENCE SUITABLE FOR AN AMBASSADOR. SUCH A RESIDENCE COULD EITHER BE LEASED OR CONSTRUCTED ON AN ATTRACTIVE PROPERTY WHICH IS NOW OWNED BY THE U.S. GOVERNMENT.

6. USIS SHOULD CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN ONE USIS LOCAL EMPLOYEE IN PARAMARIBO. HOWEVER, THIS PRESUPPOSES THAT, FOLLOWING INDEPENDENCE, USIS-PARAMARIBO WILL RECEIVE A PROPORTIONATELY LARGER SHARE OF USIS RESOURCES FROM USIS-GEORGETOWN. IF THIS ASSUMPTION PROVES TO BE UNREALISTIC, PERHAPS BECAUSE OF A NATURAL TENDENCY FOR PAOS TO BE MORE ATTENTIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THE AMBASSADOR WITH WHOM THEY ARE IN CONSTANT CONTACT AND TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE COUNTRY IN WHICH THEY RESIDE, THEN USIA SHOULD ASSIGN A RESIDENT PAO IN PARAMARIBO.
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7. AT PRESENT, THE ONLY COUNTRIES IN ADDITION TO THE UNITED STATES WHICH MAINTAIN CAREER-STAFFED CONSULATES IN PARAMARIBO ARE GUYANA, INDONESIA, BRAZIL, AND VENEZUELA. THE GUYANESE AND INDONESIAN CONSULS GENERAL HAVE THE PERSONAL RANK OF MINISTER. IN ADDITION, THERE IS A RESIDENT INDIAN CULTURAL ATTACHE. THE COUNTRIES WHICH MAINTAIN PROFESSIONALLY-STAFFED CONSULATES ARE LIKELY TO MAINTAIN AMBASSADORS IN PARAMARIBO, AND THE NETHERLANDS WILL PROBABLY MAINTAIN THE EQUIVALENT OF A HIGH COMMISSIONER. IN ADDITION, COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, SUCH AS CUBA OR THE PRC, MAY ESTABLISH A DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE IN SURINAM. THE U.S. IS THE ONLY MAJOR POWER WHICH HAS SIGNIFICANT INTERESTS IN SURINAM. THEREFORE, THE FACT THAT NO IMPORTANT EUROPEAN COUNTRY IS LIKELY TO OPEN AN EMBASSY IN PARAMARIBO SHOULD NOT BE A REASON FOR THE U.S. NOT TO DO SO.

8. ALTERNATIVES: ANOTHER ALTERNATIVE WAS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED. THIS WAS THE MAINTENANCE OF AN EMBASSY UNDER A CHARGE. THE AMBASSADOR WOULD RESIDE EITHER AT PORT OF SPAIN OR CARACAS. GEORGETOWN WOULD NOT BE A SUITABLE LOCATION BECAUSE OF FEELINGS OF RIVALRY AND DISTRUST AMONG MANY SURINAMERS

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TOWARDS GUYANA AND ITS GOVERNMENT. THIS FEELING IS A RESULT OF THE POLICIES OF THE GOG, WHICH ARE PERCEIVED BY MANY SURINAMERS AS LEFTIST AND RACIST (ANTI-INDIAN) AND OF THE BORDER DISPUTE. THE ACCREDITATION OF AN AMERICAN AMBASSADOR, RESIDENT IN GEORGETOWN, TO SURINAM WOULD EMPHASIZE THE SNUB ALREADY IMPLICIT IN A U.S. DECISION TO KEEP AN AMBASSADOR IN GEORGETOWN BUT NOT IN PARAMARIBO. SUCH AN AMBASSADOR WOULD ALSO INCUR THE SUSPICION OF BEING CLOSER AND MORE SYMPATHETIC TO THE GOG THAN TO THE GOS.

9. THE ALTERNATIVE OF A NON-RESIDENT AMBASSADOR IS IN MANY RESPECTS A REASONABLE ONE AND HAS MUCH TO RECOMMEND IT. HOWEVER, AS LONG AS THE U.S. HAS RESIDENT AMBASSADORS IN OTHER CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES WHERE THE U.S. HAS A SIMILAR OR A LESSER LEVEL OF INTERESTS AS COMPARED WITH SURINAM (I.E., BARBADOS, GUYANA), THE U.S. SHOULD HAVE A RESIDENT AMBASSADOR IN PARAMARIBO. TO DO OTHERWISE WOULD START U.S. RELATIONS WITH A NEWLY INDEPENDENT SURINAM ON A VERY SOUR NOTE AND SERIOUSLY HANDICAP THE U.S. MISSION'S TASK OF PROTECTING U.S. INTERESTS IN SURINAM.

JOHNSTON

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